THE NEGRO VOTE IN THE 1960 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN FULTON COUNTY, GEORGIA

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY

HOYT ALEXANDER KING

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

AUGUST 1969

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I. INTRODUCTION

Frequently civil rights are thought of much as they were defined during the late eighteenth century as including only those rights identified in the first eight amendments to the United States Constitution; principally, the freedom of speech, press, assembly and religious worship, and the fundamentals of a fair trial in a court of law. This view, however, overlooks one of the nation's basic civil rights--the right to vote.

The focus of this study is upon the free exercise of that right by the Negro American in an isolated instance of voting behavior--the 1960 Presidential election in Fulton County, Georgia.

Over the decades, much has been said about the importance of the Negro vote in politics or the Negro as a new force in politics--both southern and national. Like other Americans, however, Negro political participation has been at times apathetic, a seemingly strange phenomenon considering the tremendous obstacles, including the poll tax, white primary and literacy tests, with which Negroes have

had to deal in their long and arduous struggle for the free exercise of this Constitutionally guaranteed right. Nevertheless, whenever they do cast their ballots--regardless of the proportion in which it is cast--their vote is the subject of considerable attention. Inevitably, the question is asked, "Why did they vote that way?," and then the speculation begins as to the possible causes of their behavior.

It is upon this "why" of the Negro vote in the 1960 Presidential election that this study will place primary emphasis.

Preliminary observation of recent Negro political history reveals that the Negroes were in the Democratic camp in the 1948 Presidential election, but switched to that of the Republican in 1952, with the Democratic candidate receiving but a small percentage of the Negro vote that year. They remained in the Republican Party, with increasing allegiance, throughout the Eisenhower years, but made what can be interpreted as a break with that Party in 1960 by casting nearly 50 per cent of their vote for the Democratic candidate and 50 per cent for the Republican. The Negroes move from the Republican Party gained increasing momentum, climaxing with the Negroes once again almost solidly entrenched in the folds of the Democratic Party.

It is the purpose of this study to examine the developments in the background of Negro political participation in the South in an attempt to arrive at a conclusion about the Negro vote in the 1960 Presidential election.

Preliminary consideration has given rise to the belief that through the research the following assumption will be supported:

> That the history of Negro political participation leading up to 1960 was as important a factor in deciding the Negro vote in that year's Presidential election as were the major candidates themselves.

In order to substantiate this hypothesis, the study will undertake a brief analysis of the Negro's political history in the South with emphasis upon efforts--primarily attributed to the Democratic Party--at disfranchising the Negro. Some attention will also be given specifically to Negro political participation in Georgia which clearly had some effect upon political participation in Atlanta.

In pursuit of this investigation the study will employ the following methods:

1. Search of existing literature.

Those sources containing information deemed pertinent to the study will be used to provide the necessary information concerning the Negro's political history.

2. Compilation of statistical data.

The official United States censuses of population over a twenty-year period, 1940-1960, will be used; the official records of the Fulton County Registrar of Voters Office, and official records of the Secretary of State's Office showing a county-by-county tabulation of election returns and other official publications of the Secretary's Office, including various helpful maps and the Georgia Election Code will be used in compiling the material related to the analysis of the selected elections.

3. Examination of local newspapers.

The Atlanta Constitution and the Atlanta Journal will be used to supply information concerning Negro political participation in the State as well as in Fulton County. The local Negro newspapers, the Atlanta Daily World and the Atlanta Inquirer will be examined in order to provide information concerning the degree of political influence they have on Negroes in the area. Also they will be examined to determine their stands on particular issues and candidates in the selected elections, and to see how Negro leaders spoke out in favor of a particular candidate as opposed to another. Concentration will be on those issues of all the newspapers which appeared subsequent to the white primary

decisions, both in Georgia and in Texas, and upon those issues that appeared during the weeks leading up to the selected elections for the period 1948-1960.

4. Interviews with Negro leaders.

These interviews will primarily take the form of informal talks and will be used largely to supplement the printed material. The interviews will be restricted to some of the older leaders in the city who are particularly knowledgeable about the Negro's record of political participation, and the progress made by Negroes in overcoming obstacles to registration, in the State and in Fulton County proper.

The study will necessarily be faced with certain limitations. It is felt, however, that they will not seriously hamper the findings of the study. One such limitation is to be encountered in examining the United States Census data. Interim population figures published in the annual census abstracts do not have an age breakdown. Therefore, no true figures of the actual voting age population can be determined for other than the decennial census years. The study will therefore be forced to rely upon estimates for interim years which are deemed close-enough approximations of the actual figures.

One other limitation, which at first seemed tremendous, is the fact that there is no official agency or register in the State of Georgia or Fulton County that is responsible for keeping the official precinct returns from the various selections. This obstacle, however, was overcome in that where these official returns would not be obtained through other sources, the returns published in the official county newspaper were used. Although unofficial, these returns do furnish an accurate estimate of the outcome of the election in each precinct.

By a careful exploration of the above avenues of inquiry and the prudent compilation of the data uncovered, it is believed that this study will accomplish its stated aim, an explanation of the Negro vote in the 1960 Presidential election.

II. THE NEGRO AND THE BALLOT: 1870-1960

The importance of the right to vote

"An essential feature of our form of government is the right of the citizen to participate in the governmental process."[1] Through the careful exercise of this right a citizen may remedy some of his civic grievances. He may exercise this right primarily in support of a particular candidate, issue or party; or he may use the right to turn out of office an unsatisfactory candidate. The citizen may act alone, or he may combine his vote with those of other citizens to effect a certain change in public policy. In short, a citizen's right to vote gives him a choice in the selection of governmental officials and policies; it gives him a right to participate in the everyday affairs of his community.

Conversely, a voteless people has no voice in the political life of its community. Consequently, for about

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[1]U.S., Commission on Civil Rights, Voting, 1961 Commission on Civil Rights Report, Book I (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 15.

seventy-five years after being made a citizen, the Negro American in the South was without a voice in civic affairs. The legal right existed for much of this time, but because of the efforts of southern whites who wanted to "keep the Negro in his place," he was unable to exercise this right. Therefore, it was not unusual that in such places as Opelousas, Louisiana, "no Negro was allowed to come within the limits of the town without special permission of his employer,"[2] or to find many other communities wherein Negroes were to be off the streets by a specific hour.

Racial discrimination at the polls has been one of the roots of all the Negro's social and civic ills in the South since the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment. It is a practice that has been widely condoned throughout the South. The national government has made numerous attempts to strike down this discrimination at the polls. The Supreme Court has ruled it unconstitutional; Congress has outlawed it. Yet, it has persisted in one form or another in parts of the South.[3]

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[2]John Hope Franklin, Reconstruction After the Civil War (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 49.

[3]U.S., Commission on Civil Rights, loc. cit.

The national consequence of disfranchisement for any group of people is complete economic, political and social alienation. This has been in part, the plight of the Negro since 1870. A Negro witness at the Civil Rights Commission's hearings in Louisiana summed the case up classically when he said:

> So, you see, we have nobody to represent us, on the Jury, school board office, the State Legislature, nowhere. All the laws are being passed we have no voice in, whether it is for us or against us, and I don't think you can find many that is for us.[4]

Legal and extralegal means of disfranchisement

When the United States Constitution was adopted in 1789, the individual citizen had no basic civil rights; these basic rights were not granted until 1791 in the form of the eight amendments to that document. Also, there was no provision in the original Constitution for a free and open franchise, perhaps largely because the Anglo-Saxon founding fathers could find no such provision in the mother country which they could have incorporated in the American document. In fact, during the first eighty years of the nation's constitutional history, the suffrage was viewed

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[4] Ibid., p. 16.

more or less as a privilege and was widely restricted to one class--the adult white males. Even then, the right to vote was largely subjected to rigid, artificial and often harsh restrictions, including such things as property and religious qualifications.[5]

In order to remedy this situation somewhat, and to guarantee a meaningful right to vote, particularly to Negroes, two amendments to the Constitution were passed in rapid succession--the Fourteenth in 1868 and the Fifteenth in 1870. The essence of these two of the three Civil War Amendments was to grant citizenship and the right to vote to the Negro. Yet, despite the fact that through these amendments, the Negro was given the constitutional rights of being a citizen and to vote, he still encountered mammoth opposition, especially in the South, in the exercise of this right. White southerners resorted to numerous forms of terror and intimidation--notably Ku Klux Klan raids, arson, lynchings, and many other atrocities--in order to deny the Negro his constitutionally guaranteed right.[6]

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[5]Charles Aikin, The Negro Votes (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1962), p. 1.

[6]Franklin, op. cit., pp. 153-157.

Subtle means of disfranchisement which at times bordered on the incredible were also employed. Such things as last-minute changes in polling places, complicated ballots, and literacy tests effected both the common whites and the Negro.[7] The height of atrocities directed against the Negro was perhaps realized in the "Mississippi Plan," which evolved in the 1870's. The overt purpose of this plan was "overthrowing the Negro vote by brute force."[8] Through such methods as riot, fraud, intimidation, and boycott, the Negro as a factor in Mississippi politics was effectively neutralized. This plan also spread to other states in the South.[9]

As if these heinous acts were not enough, the White Southerners also pursued more sophisticated legal means through direct state action indirectly aimed at Negro disfranchisement.[10] These efforts materialized either in the form of statutes or constitutional amendments. Legislators

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[7] Ibid., p. 219.

[8] W.E.B. DuBois, Black Reconstruction (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1935), pp. 412, 447-450, passim.

[9] V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1949), pp. 535-539.

[10] Ibid.

in Mississippi, South Carolina, and Louisiana led the way in contriving devious techniques designed to void the Constitutional guarantee to the Negro by constitutional means. The limitations imposed by these states even seem drastic when compared with those imposed by the other southern states that imitated them. Mississippi, for example, at its constitutional convention of 1890, adopted an elaborate electoral scheme bent on circumventing the National Constitution. It contained provisions for lengthy residence requirements, a poll tax, literacy or "understanding" tests, and advanced registration.[11]

Five years later, at its constitutional convention, South Carolina promulgated a document whose suffrage provisions were similar to those of Mississippi. The principal difference in the two sets of provisions was the establishment in South Carolina of additional alternatives to literacy which might enable whites to vote. Under these provisions, a South Carolina resident unable to fulfill the literacy requirements might still qualify to vote through the payment of a property tax. This tax had to be paid during the previous year and the property on which it was

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[11] Ibid., p. 537.

paid must have had an assessed value of $300 or more.[12]

Louisiana in 1898 put its new constitution into effect incorporating the novel "grandfather clause" designed to allow poor and illiterate whites to qualify to vote, while effectively disfranchising the Negro.[13]

Together the Mississippi, South Carolina, and Louisiana constitutions contained the basic provisions which were to be copied in some form or other by the other southern states. It was the now famous grandfather clause as incorporated into the Oklahoma constitution in 1910 that provided the basis for the first major Constitutional test in the twentieth century of a "legal" mode of disfranchisement.

The Oklahoma grandfather clause required that a person be able to read and write any section of the state constitution in order to qualify as a voter. However, those persons or descendents of such persons who were entitled to vote under any form of government prior to January 1, 1866, were exempted from the test. Since Negroes were not allowed to vote in that state and many others prior to 1866, the required literacy test was used to disfranchise the majority

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[12] Ibid., p. 538.

[13] Ibid.

of them.

In 1915,[14] the constitutionality of the Oklahoma amendment was challenged. The Supreme Court in a unanimous decision ruled that the provision was designed to circumvent the Fifteenth Amendment by setting the date of voting eligibility for illiterates prior to the Fifteenth Amendment. Since Negroes had not been enfranchised before that date, the Court ruled that the amendment was designed to prevent them from voting on the basis of their race, and thus was held to be contrary to the Fifteenth Amendment.[15] This decision effectively knocked out a temporary provision that had been incorporated in many of the southern states' constitutions.

Aside from the constitutional means of Negro disfranchisement, an extralegal phenomenon known as the "white primary" originated in the South about the same time as the

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[14] Guinn v. United States, 238 U.S. 347 (1915).

[15] In 1916, Oklahoma enacted a new law designed to disfranchise Negroes. Although this one omitted the ancestral exemptions that were struck down in the Guinn case, it, nevertheless, provided that persons eligible to vote in 1914, a time when the grandfather clause was still in effect, were permanently qualified to vote. All others were required to register during a twelve-day period or otherwise be permanently disfranchised. The law was struck down by the Supreme Court in Lane v. Wilson, 307 U.S. 268 (1939).

direct primary and became a more effective method of disfranchisement than any of the constitutional or statutory ones. By interpreting its action as being that of a private association and not a part of state action, the Democratic Party was legally able to circumvent the constitution and practice discrimination along wholly racial lines. Ultimately the direct primary method of nomination came to be regulated by formal party statutes rather than simply by party rule, thus making for a formal limitation of primary participation.

Eventually this phenomenon was to spread over the entire South. Consequently, largely because of the one-party nature of the South, Negroes, with but few exceptions,[16] were without a voice up until the time of the Supreme Court's monumental decision in 1944.

The Supreme Court and Negro suffrage

Smith v. Allwright, the landmark case of 1944,

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[16]After reconstruction ended in the South, Negroes adhered, almost to a man, to the Republican Party, and the Democratic Party remained lilly-white. As the direct primary became more popular as a method of nomination, the white primary rule was simply a continuation of already existent practices. "Negroes were all Republicans anyway." Key, op. cit., p. 620.

climaxed a seventy-five year struggle on the part of Negroes in the South to vote.[17] The history of that struggle which began in 1870 has been traced in part up to this point.

The Texas legislature, in the early 1920's, obviously inspired by the Supreme Court's ruling in the case of Newberry v. United States,[18] provided the impetus that set in motion a series of attacks on what was perhaps the most serious obstacle to Negro suffrage in the South--the notorious white primary. The Court, in its 1920 ruling, had apparently given sanction to the white primary notion. Interpreting the case in light of Article I, section 4, of the Constitution,[19] the Court ruled that the Congressional power to regulate the manner of holding elections does not include the regulation of primaries. Mr. Justice McReynolds, delivering the majority opinion in the case, said that the Court could not conclude "that authority to control party

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[17] Sidney A. Jones, Jr., The White Primary and the Supreme Court. Reprinted from the National Bar Journal, III (March, 1945).

[18] 256 U.S. 232 (1920).

[19] Article I, sec. 4, of the Constitution states in part: "The Times, Places, and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each state by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such Regulations. . . ."

primaries or conventions for designating candidates was bestowed on Congress by the grant of power to regulate the manner of holding elections." Such an exercise of authority would "infringe upon liberties reserved to the people."[20]

The Texas white primary law, passed in 1923, and in part induced by a disappointed candidate who had lost the Negro vote and consequently the nomination in a San Antonio primary in which Negroes had participated, forbade Negroes "to participate in a Democratic primary election held in the State of Texas."[21] Prior to that time, exclusion of Negroes from the Democratic primaries had been accomplished outside the framework of state action, thus keeping within the legal limits of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Now, Texas for the first time had taken direct state action in the form of a legislative act denying Negroes the right to participate in its primaries, and consequently leaving itself open to challenge.

The first of these attacks came in 1927 from an El Paso, Texas, Negro doctor, L. A. Nixon, who alleged that

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[20] Newberry v. United States.

[21] V. O. Key, Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups (4th ed.; New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1958), p. 653.

election officials had denied his request to vote. The Court, in what seems to have been a unanimous opinion, did not consider the act in question in terms of the Fifteenth Amendment, but voided it in light of the equal protection of the laws provision of the Fourteenth. Mr. Justice Holmes, delivering the opinion of the Court, found it "hard to imagine a more direct and obvious infringment of the Fourteenth."[22]

Five years later, Dr. Nixon was before the Court again after having been once more denied the right to vote.[23] Subsequent to his first case, the Texas legislature had passed a new statute charging the executive committee of each party with the authority to determine who could vote in its primaries. Acting under this statute, the Democratic Party once again barred Negroes from its primary. The statute was brought into question because it was thought to be in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Court, in a majority opinion delivered by Mr. Justice Cardoza, interpreted the action of the executive committee in this case as being state action and therefore ruled the Texas statute

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[22] Nixon v. Herndon, 273 U.S. 536 (1927).

[23] Nixon v. Condon, 286 U.S. 73 (1932).

a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The most startling of the white primary cases was decided by the Court in 1935.[24] This time the Democratic Party, acting at its state convention, had tried to preserve its white primary by denying membership in the party to Negroes, which in turn denied them the right to vote because they were not members of the party. The Court upheld this action, ruling unanimously that it was definitely party action and not state action as in the other two cases. Thus with this case it appeared as though Texas and the remainder of the South had finally hit upon the one thing that would effectively disfranchise Negroes without violating the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

This immunity, however, was not very long-lived, in that finally in 1944 the long-awaited climax to the Negro's struggle for the vote was reached in the Supreme Court's decision in Smith v. Allwright.[25] In what was termed a "smashing victory" for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People,[26] the Court took a complete

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[24] Grovey v. Townsend, 295 U.S. 45 (1935).

[25] 321 U.S. 649 (1944).

[26] "The Supreme Court Rules Out White Primaries," Crisis (May, 1944), 164.

reversal from its earlier stand in Grovey v. Townsend and declared that the action of the Texas Democratic convention in restricting its membership to whites, thereby excluding Negroes from the electoral process, was "state action within the meaning of the Fifteenth Amendment. . . ."[27]

The Supreme Court's decision in Smith v. Allwright effectively marked the end of the extralegal white primary as a method of complete disfranchisement of the Negro in the South. From that time on, efforts to deny Negroes the opportunity to exercise their constitutionally guaranteed right generally took milder forms such as a poll tax or literacy test.

The Smith v. Allwright decision also represented a significant legal triumph for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People whose lawyers had long been active in the struggle to end racial discrimination at the polls. Having won their first major suffrage victory in the Guinn case in 1915, the N.A.A.C.P. lawyers repeated this feat in 1927 and again in 1932. They met with defeat, however, in the Grovey case arising out of Houston, Texas, in 1935, but gained added impetus from the results of the

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[27] Smith v. Allwright.

Classic case of 1941,[28] and went on that same year to file in the federal court at Houston, the Smith case, challenging the white primary. An interesting sidelight of the case is that it projected into the limelight one of the most able defenders of Negro rights in the twentieth century--Mr. Thurgood Marshall, assistant to Judge William H. Hastie in arguing the case before the Supreme Court.[29]

The Negro and the ballot in Georgia

The invalidation of the white primary combined with the stimulus generated by the war created a general resurgence of political activity among Negroes in the South. After the end of Reconstruction and the disintegration of the Republican Party in the South, and after having been alienated for ao long by the Democratic Party in the South, Negroes for the most part appeared to be ready to step into their new roles a full-fledged citizens and exercise their

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[28] United States v. Classic, 313 U.S. 299 (1941). In this Louisiana case election officials charged with fraud in a direct primary nomination of a U.S. Representative, argued that direct primaries were not subject to federal regulation. The Court, in a 5-3 decision, ruled that a primary election in this sense (that is, where the Primary is an integral part of chosing one's representatives, or where it actually controls that choice) would fall under the meaning of elections in Article I, secs. 2 and 4, of the Constitution.

[29] Crisis, loc. cit.

constitutionally guaranteed right to vote. What appears to have been typical of this feeling of readiness on the part of Negroes, particularly Georgians, was expressed in a statement before the press by a prominent Atlanta Negro, Mr. C. A. Scott, editor of the Atlanta Daily World, and chairman of the Public Affairs Committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: "the Supreme Court decision is clear and cleancut . . . I expect to case one /a vote/ in the primary July 4."[30]

Casting a vote in the July 4, 1944, primary was to prove to Negroes not to be as easy a task as Mr. Scott's statement may have implied. The State Executive Committee had met before the July primary and decided that the decision in the Smith case only applied to the state of Texas. The Georgia primary was left intact for the simple reason that "Georgia officials were not parties to the case."[31]

Already under way at that time was a plan designed to test the Georgia white primary. Muscogee County party officials and Negro leaders had met and arranged for a token vote to be attempted by a selected group of Negroes

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[30] Atlanta Journal, April 4, 1944.

[31] Ibid., June 7, 1944.

in Columbus, Georgia.[32] Shortly afterwards, Negro leaders in Atlanta decided to try a similar plan.[33]

It was the Columbus plan, however, out of which the eventual Court case was to grow. The plantiff in the case, the Rev. Primus E. King, along with other Negroes in the Columbus test group, had been denied the right to vote in the July, 1944, primary. Supported by collections from various Negro churches, Rev. King filed suit against the Democratic Party. His case was heard by Federal Judge T. Hoyt Davis, himself a Georgia Democrat. The ruling in the case was handed down in October, 1945, with Judge Davis saying in part that the primary is:

> . . . an integral part of the electoral process of this state. . . . It is the hub of the process. When the Democratic Party holds a primary in this state the system is substantially the same . . . as the Texas and Louisiana systems.[34]

It was obvious from the decision that the white primary in Georgia had finally come to its end. Nevertheless, die-hard party leaders appealed the decision.[35] The

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[32] Ibid., May 31, 1944.

[33] Ibid., June 7, 1944.

[34] King v. Chapman, 62 F. Supp. 639 (1945).

[35] It is at this stage that the N.A.A.C.P. intervened in the case and offered to help Rev. King.

decision, however, was upheld and later the Supreme Court refused to review the case.[36]

Although the King decision opened the door to full participation in the proceedings of the Democratic Party, the Negro faced still another obstacle, namely, the undemocratic county unit system, which had become an integral part of the Georgia primary. This system, peculiar to Georgia, was begun during the colonial period and had been definitely established by 1843.[37]

The county unit system, also referred to as "the 3-2-1 plan,"[38] was based on the representation of the lower house of the State Legislature. According to the plan, each county was given twice as many unit votes as it had representatives in the General Assembly. Table 1 below illustrates the distribution of unit votes by counties during the last days of the county unit system. The necessary majority for election at this time was 206 unit votes. It is obvious from the table that the rural areas dominated the

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[36] Chapman v. King, 154 F (ad) 460 (1946).

[37] L. M. Holland, The Direct Primary in Georgia (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1949), p. 44.

[38] Ibid., p. 45.

remainder of the state.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTY UNIT VOTES IN GEORGIA[a]

Size of Co's	No. of Co's	No. of Rep's Each	Unit Vote Each	Total
Largest	8	3	6	48
Intermediate	30	2	4	120
Smallest	121	1	2	242
Total	159			410

[a]U.S. Census Report, Holland, loc. cit.

This system of voting was employed in making nominations to most of the major state offices, including governor, supreme court justices, and even United States Senators and Representatives. In order to be nominated, a candidate had only to receive a plurality of the unit votes, or in the case of nominations for governor or senator, a majority. To secure the unit votes of a particular county a mere plurality of the popular votes cast was necessary. In many instances it was not necessary for a candidate to have received a majority of the total popular vote in order to secure the nomination. The gubernatorial election of 1932 out of

which Eugene Talmadge emerged the victor illustrates this phenomenon. In that contest, Talmadge received a majority of fifty-nine unit votes, although he was some 22,000 popular votes short of a majority.[39]

The overall effect of this distribution of unit votes was that the voting power of the more populous counties of the state was considerably less than that of the smaller counties. More specifically, the county unit system neutralized the effect of the Negro vote. The 121 smallest counties in the state controlled a majority of the unit votes, thus enabling them to determine the outcome of any election. Negroes were largely located in these rural black belt areas of the state, where political interest among Negroes was generally low; and in the urban centers, which were practically voiceless in state affairs.

Negro registration

According to the United States Statistical Abstract of 1947, the total population of the state of Georgia was 3,123,723. Of this number, 2,038,278 were white and 1,084,927 were Negro. The total population of the United

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[39]E. Merton Coulter, Georgia, A Short History (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1947), pp. 437-438.

States itself was 131,080,388, with a racial breakdown between white and Negro of 118,214,870 to 12,865,518. By the time of the 1944 white primary decision, the maximum potential voting strength of the Negro was estimated to be about seven and one-quarter million out of a 91,600,000 nationwide total of voting age citizens.[40] The actual voting strength of the Negro in the South was understandably slight at this time, having been estimated to be about 250,000. By the end of 1948, the actual Negro voting population in the South had only reached 750,000, a significant increase over the 1940 figure, yet still not too impressive when compared with the more than seven million Negroes eligible but not registered to vote.[41]

Early estimates of the prospective strength of the southern Negro vote by the time of the 1948 presidential election proved to be highly optimistic when they placed the strength of the Negro vote at one million. The actual Negro registration figures at that time fell somewhat short of this projected figure in that the eleven states of the

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[40]Henry Lee Moon, Balance of Power: The Negro Vote (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1949), pp. 9-10.

[41]These figures are based on thirteen southern states.

Deep or Solid South recorded only 595,000 registered Negroes. It was not until the 1952 presidential election that Negro registration in the Deep South surpassed the one million mark. During that span of years the Negro voting population was increased by better than 413,000 voters. No such similar increase was made in the Negro voting population until the six-year period between 1960 and 1966 when the registration figures increased by more than one million. Table 2 illustrates this growth in Negro voter registration during the thirteen-year period from 1947 to 1960; a comparison of Tables 2 and 3 will show the increase in voter registration during the six-year period following the period of this study.

During the period between the invalidation of the white primary and the 1960 presidential election, the South as usual continued to lag behind the rest of the country in the overall percentage of eligible citizens who voted. For example, during the 1956 presidential campaign only slightly more than 26 per cent of the eligible Negroes in the South were registered; whereas, about 60 per cent of the white voting age population was registered, although in many cases the white voter rolls were padded.[42]

[42]Margaret Price, The Negro and the Ballot in the South (Atlanta: Southern Regional Council, 1959), pp. 9-11. These figures are based on eleven southern states.

TABLE 2

NEGRO REGISTRATION: 1947-1960[a]

State	1947	1952	1956	1958	1960
Alabama	6,000	25,224	23,366	70,000	73,272
Arkansas	47,000	61,413	69,677	64,023	72,604
Florida	49,000	120,900	148,703	144,810	163,128
Georgia	125,000	144,835	163,389	161,958	180,000
Louisiana	10,000	120,000	161,410	131,068	156,938
Mississippi	5,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	22,000
North Carolina	75,000	100,000	135,000	150,000	172,166
South Carolina	50,000	80,000	99,890	57,978	58,122
Tennessee	80,000	85,000	90,000	185,000	185,000
Texas	100,000	181,916	214,000	226,818	226,818
Virginia	48,000	69,326	82,603	92,172	100,100
Totals	595,000	1,008,614	1,238,038	1,303,827	1,410,148

[a]Figures obtained from the Southern Regional Council.

Generally throughout the entire period Negro registration made gradual increases. The greatest increase, however, came at the close of the period when between 1960 and 1966, Negro voter registration increased from 28.2 per cent to more than 50 per cent. Table 3 illustrates this growth in Negro registration.

Despite the fact that 26 per cent of the Negro voting age population was registered in the South as a whole as far back as 1956 (before the Voting Rights Bill and federal intervention), caution needs to be exercised in the interpretation of these percentages in that many areas of the South were far from this proportion. Discrimination against Negroes had traditionally been practiced in these areas and this discrimination was more acute in those black belt areas where the ratio of Negroes to whites was highest.[43]

Nevertheless, the Negro has made considerable strides since the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution in what was an uphill fight all the way. for the free exercise of his constitutional right. Despite the obstacles, he was persistent in this struggle--"intent upon attaining full equality of citizenship in his native

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[43]Key, op. cit., p. 666.

TABLE 3

NEGRO VOTER REGISTRATION FOR SELECTIVE YEARS
AND VOTING AGE POPULATION

Southern States	1940		1952		1956		1960		Spring 1966	
	No. Reg.	%VAP Reg.	No. Reg.	%VAP Reg.	No. Reg.	%VAP Reg.	No. Reg.	%VAP Reg.	No. Reg.	%VAP Reg.
Total	250,000	4.9	1,008,614	21.3	1,238,038	26.2	1,410,148	28.2	2,503,140	50.1

Census 1940	Census 1950	Census 1960
Negro VAP	Negro VAP	Negro VAP
7,025,000	4,729,956	5,000,376

land."[44] And, today--with the importance of his vote being generally conceded, and much being said about the Negro as a new force in politics, both southern and national--the Negro seems to be slowly waking up to the fact that the ballot is his most effective instrument in his continuing struggle for equality.

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[44]Moon, op. cit., p. 7.

III. EARLY ELECTIONS: PRELUDE TO 1960

The Presidential election of 1948

When Franklin D. Roosevelt died in April, 1945, Vice-President Harry S. Truman succeeded him as the thirty-second President of the United States.[1]

Roosevelt, author and initiator of the "New Deal," had quite an impressive record when compared with that of his successor. He had attended college at Harvard, and Columbia's Law School. He had served in the New York Legislature and in President Woodrow Wilson's cabinet before becoming the Governor of New York State for two terms. Moreover, Roosevelt, as President, became the only man in history to be elected to the presidency for more than two terms. Through his New Deal policies he had also become the hero of the working classes and the underprivileged.

Truman, on the other hand, was a man of common background with no more than a high school education. He had served in the armed forces and risen to the rank of Major. Upon his discharge from service he opened a haberdashery

[1]Rexford G. Tugwell, How They Became President (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), pp. 403-427 passim.

business in Kansas City, Missouri, which failed two years later. Truman then ran and was elected to a minor public office in Missouri. In 1934, he was elected to the United States Senate, where he remained until 1944, when he was nominated and elected Vice-President with Franklin Roosevelt.

Within a few months after Roosevelt's death and Truman's succession to office, World War II was to come to an end and the United States would then begin its return to the ways of peace. Those old domestic quarrels, which are inevitably suppressed during critical times would be renewed. Like Lincoln, death had spared Roosevelt these hardships.

Nevertheless, as his successor, Truman would necessarily inherit all the resentment of the administration that had been building up throughout the course of the war. Moreover, the Republicans emerged victorious from the mid-term elections of 1946, having their most successful campaign in more than twenty years. The Truman Administration was thus faced with the added problem of a Republican majority in both houses of Congress and in the executive departments of the several states.

Fortunately for Truman, however, he had nearly four years in order to smooth out some of the existing difficulties before facing the electorate. Throughout this period

his popularity was to fluctuate greatly. At the nadir in 1946, the Marshall Plan, governmental control of prices, and his attitude toward the Soviet Union, brought the President's popularity up to a new level the following year.[2]

By the Spring of 1948, Mr. Truman's popularity was once again at an all-time low. In October, 1947, the President's Civil Rights Commission had recommended a far-reaching program for the protection of minorities. Mr. Truman's advocacy of this program alienated the southern wing of the party. Even before Mr. Truman could call upon Congress to implement the Commission's proposals, Mississippi Governor Fielding L. Wright, in his January, 1948, inaugural address, denounced the program and called for an open break with the Democratic Party.[3]

Moreover, because Mr. Truman's popularity was at such a low ebb, party leaders began to look around for another possible nominee to head the Democratic ticket in 1948. As the November elections drew nearer, a coalition consisting of States' Righters, big city bosses, and party liberals began to push for the nomination of General Dwight

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Key, Southern Politics, p. 331.

D. Eisenhower, whose party identification nor political philosophy were known at that time.[4]

After Eisenhower's refusal to accept the Democratic nomination, there was a brief but futile attempt to draft Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas.[5] Following the refusal of both these men, Truman's nomination for the Presidency seemed certain, and the lackluster Democrats assembled in July at Philadelphia's Convention Hall to affirm their obvious choice.

By the end of July, 1948, the stage had already been set for a four-way Presidential race in the upcoming November election. The Democrats had chosen Truman and Berkley on the first ballot; it had taken the Republicans three ballots to reach a decision at Philadelphia on Dewey and Warren. Rebellious Southerners, outraged by the National Democratic civil rights plank, had met in Birmingham, Alabama, and nominated Thurmond of South Carolina and Wright of Mississippi, while the Progressives had nominated Wallace and Taylor.[6]

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[4] New York Times, June 6, 1948.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Congressional Quarterly Service, Politics in America; 1945-1964 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1965), p. 6.

With four candidates in the race, Mr. Truman's election seemed an impossibility. Some of the events of his administration had been marked by several petty scandals which had irritated the public. Moreover, there was the Republican opposition in the able and aggressive character of Mr. Dewey with which to contend. Also, there was an additional threat posed by the split within his own party. Wallace threatened to draw the liberal votes from the President, and the right wing States' Righters threatened to capture the traditionally Democratic South. It is no surprise then that, with Truman confronted with seemingly mammoth odds, professional pollsters predicted his defeat in November.[7]

The total vote cast in the 1948 Presidential election was 48,690,956.[8] Mr. Truman, the victor, captured 49.5 per cent of that vote, and the runner-up, Mr. Dewey, captured 45.1 per cent. The remainder of the vote was split between minor party candidates, the bulk of which went to

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[7]Tugwell, op. cit., p. 436.

[8]America Votes, ed. Richard M. Scammon (6 vols.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), II, pp. 5-6. Unless otherwise noted, figures on the 1948 Presidential election are from this volume.

the States' Righters and Progressives.

The final electoral count in the election showed Truman having more than the necessary majority with 303 votes, carrying a total of twenty-eight states,[9] and Dewey with 189 electoral votes from sixteen states. The remaining states and electoral votes went into the column of the States' Rights Party. Table 4 illustrates this breakdown of the popular and electoral votes in the 1948 election.

It is interesting to note here that a shift of roughly twelve thousand votes in two key states, California and Ohio, would have denied the election to Truman without giving it to Dewey.[10] Since, in such a case, neither candidate would have had a clear majority, the election would have been thrown into the House of Representatives, wherein, the 39 electoral votes captured by Thurmond would have decided the election.

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[9]Truman did not get all the electoral votes from the State of Tennessee. An elector in that State cast a vote for the States' Rights candidates, Thurmond and Wright.

[10]The possibility of such a shift in the votes was not farfetched, in that Truman carried these two states, and also Illinois--which would have cinched the election for Dewey--by less than one per cent of the popular vote. The fifty electoral votes from these two states would have then been given to Dewey instead of Truman. Truman would have still led in electoral votes, however (253-239), but he would not have had the necessary majority of 267.

TABLE 4

NATIONWIDE VOTE IN 1948 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Candidates	Party	Popular Vote	Percentage Popular Vote	Electoral Vote
Harry S. Truman and Alben Barkley	Democratic	24,104,030	49.51	303
Thomas E. Dewey and Earl Warren	Republican	21,971,004	45.13	189
J. Strom Thurmond and Fielding L. Wright	States' Rights	1,169,032	2.40	39
Henry A. Wallace and Glen H. Taylor	Progressive	1,157,063	2.38	
Norman Thomas and Tucker P. Smith	Socialist	139,523	.29	
Claude A. Watson and Dale H. Learn	Prohibition	103,343	.20	
Edwart A. Teichert and Stephen Emery	Socialist-Labor	29,240	.06	
Farrell Dobbs and Grace Carlson	Socialist-Workers	13,611		
Totals		48,690,956	100.00	531

The outcome of the 1948 election in Georgia was quite different from what had been expected at the Birmingham Convention. Instead of the names of Thurmond and Wright replacing the regular Democratic ticket on the ballot, their names were placed on the ballot as a third party ticket. Judging from the outcome of the election in those four states in which the States' Rights ticket did replace the regular Democratic ticket,[11] this move in Georgia, as well as the other Southern States that followed suit, was detrimental to the conservative States' Righters. The regular Democrats, in spite of the broad civil rights plank in their platform, carried the State, capturing more than 60 per cent of the popular vote.

A county-by-county breakdown of the election results reveals that the regular Democrats polled a majority in all but twenty-five of Georgia's 159 counties.[12] Of these twenty-five counties not in the Democratic column, the States' Rights Party commanded a majority in ten. The

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[11]Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina.

[12]The Political Almanac, 1952, comp. George Gallup (New York: B. C. Forbes and Sons Publishing Co., Inc., 1952), pp. 128-134. County figures for this election are taken from this volume.

Republicans only managed to carry two of these counties, while in the remaining thirteen counties, no party obtained a majority. The regular Democrats did, however, receive a plurality in ten of the thirteen counties.

The combined totals of the States' Rights and regular Democratic candidates illustrates the extent to which Georgians voted against the Republican Party in this election. Nearly half of Georgia's 159 counties registered combined totals of more than 90 per cent. Chattahochee, with 99.1 per cent polled the highest. Out of twenty-seven of the counties registering combined totals of less than 80 per cent, only two, Dawson and Fannin, fell into the Republican column.

Election results from Fulton County revealed that it was not high on the list of support for the Democratic Party. The county only gave the Democrats a 58 per cent majority of its vote, while the Republicans received a substantial 29.8 per cent. The States' Rights Party, which ran a poor third in the county, received the remaining 12 per cent of the vote. Fulton, likewise, was low in its combined total of States' Rights and Democratic support, polling only 70.2 per cent of its vote for the two parties, thus making it third among the ten counties ranked lowest

in combined support for the two parties.

The overall result of the 1948 election was certainly surprising. For months preceeding the election, pollsters had been predicting the more or less certain defeat of Mr. Truman. Despite this, however, Mr. Truman moved out in front early on election eve and remained there until Mr. Dewey conceded the following morning.[13]

The voter turnout on that election day was light. The contest somehow seems to have not engendered the enthusiasm that might ordinarily be expected in a Presidential race. Truman supporters stayed away from the polls because they thought their support was useless; Dewey supporters did likewise because they thought theirs to be unnecessary.[14] Nevertheless, Mr. Truman emerged from the contest victorious, and in so doing he became "one of the few successors by death who go on to becoming winning candidates on their own."[15]

Largely because the Negro had been so long barred

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[13] Atlanta Journal, November 3, 1948.

[14] Morris L. Ernst and David Loth, The People Know Best (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1949), pp. 9-10.

[15] Tugwell, op. cit., p. 437.

from the democratic processes in the South, the impact of his vote coming into the 1948 Presidential election was not considered to be of great consequence. What was acknowledged, however, was the strength of the Negro vote outside the South, and the fact that in any close national election Negroes controlled enough votes in fifteen states outside the South to swing a total of 277 electoral votes to the party of their choice.

Thus, Mr. Truman was faced with the added dilemma of having to pacify both northern Negroes and southern whites regarding his party's civil rights plan. If he pushed too hard for the plan, Mr. Truman stood the chance of further alienating the South--that traditional area upon which Democratic candidates rely for support--and driving it deeper into the folds of the States' Rights Party, while, on the other hand, if he did not fight hard enough, he faced the risk of losing the support of Northern Negroes. Added to this was the concentrated appeal of the Progressives for the Negro vote.[16]

In spite of this appeal, however, final election returns from the major Northern centers of Negro population

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[16]"The Negro Prefers Truman," The New Republic, CXIX (November 22, 1948), 8.

revealed that Negroes backed Mr. Truman as strongly as they had his predecessor, Franklin Roosevelt.

More than 75 per cent of the Negroes voting in 1948 cast their ballots for President Truman. Returns from Chicago and Philadelphia, ranked second and third, respectively, according to the size of their Negro populations, show that Negroes in Chicago's second ward gave Mr. Truman his greatest win-margin in the city, and nine out of every ten of Philadelphia's Negroes cast ballots for the President. Pittsburgh, ranked considerably lower, showed a similar trend when an all-Negro district of that city gave Mr. Truman a better than three-to-one margin of victory over runner-up, Mr. Dewey.[17]

A west coast daily newspaper revealed a similar pattern among Negro voters in California when it reported that "Negroes piled up heavy pluralities for Harry Truman, shunned Henry Wallace, and all but ignored Thomas E. Dewey."[18]

The Presidential election of 1952

As President Truman's first full term in office drew

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid. Statement quoted from the West Coast Daily Worker.

to an end the usual speculation began as to whether he would accept another nomination by the Democratic Party. The President, however, quickly ended this speculation when he indicated that "after seven years at the White House . . ." his preference was that he "should not run again."[19]

At this time it was also understood that Mr. Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson, Mr. Truman's first choice as his successor, had declined to enter the race. With the formal entry into the race of the Tennessee Senator, Estes Kefauver, Mr. Truman began to be pressured by party leaders to designate a candidate or take some kind of positive action that would prevent Kefauver from gaining delegate support in the upcoming preferential primaries.[20] It is with this thought in mind that Mr. Truman turned to Governor Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois.

Governor Stevenson, however, despite Mr. Truman's pledge of support, consistently expressed his disinterest in the campaign, and it was only through a draft movement at the 1952 Democratic Convention that Stevenson ultimately became the Democratic standard bearer.

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[19] New York Times, January 24, 1952.

[20] Ibid.

In the meantime, the Republicans were also busy trying to find a suitable nominee. In early January, 1952, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., of Massachusetts announced his intention to enter General Dwight D. Eisenhower's name in the March 11, New Hampshire Primary.[21] Prior to this time, neither General Eisenhower's party affiliation nor political philosophy had been known. This is evidenced by the futile attempt to get Eisenhower to accept the 1948 Democratic nomination. Nevertheless, Senator Lodge maintained that the General was a Republican.

Shortly after Senator Lodge's announcement, General Eisenhower announced from his North Atlantic Treaty Organization headquarters in Paris that he would accept a call by the Republican Party.[22]

In the pre-convention contests, General Eisenhower, despite his refusal to campaign, made quite an impressive showing, defeating Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio in the New Hampshire primary, running a strong second to "favorite son" candidate Harold Stassen in Minnesota, and going on to victory in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Oregon. The most

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[21] Ibid., January 7, 1952.

[22] Ibid., January 8, 1952.

effective candidate in the Democratic pre-convention contests was Senator Kefauver, suffering but one defeat, at the hands of Georgia Senator Richard B. Russell in the Florida primary.

In July, 1952, both major parties assembled at Chicago's International Amphitheatre for their respective conventions. The Republicans convened first. To make their final decision on General Eisenhower, the Republicans needed but one round of balloting. General Eisenhower chose for a running mate Senator Richard M. Nixon of California. The Democrats, on the other hand, went through three rounds of balloting before finally deciding upon Governor Stevenson. His running mate was Senator John J. Sparkman of Alabama.

Careful so as not to make the same mistake that they did in 1948, professional pollsters and commentators generally did not venture to predict the outcome of the 1952 election.[23] Even so, when the election eve returns were tallied, it was clear that General Eisenhower had won a landslide victory.

The total popular vote cast in the 1952 election was

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[23] The Political Almanac, 1952, op. cit., p. 3.

61,550,918.[24] Eisenhower won the election by a 6,621,242-vote plurality. In winning that election he polled 33,936,234 votes--the highest number of popular votes ever cast for a Presidential candidate. Stevenson likewise set a record in losing that election. With 27,314,992 votes, hepolled the highest number of votes ever received by a defeated Presidential candidate.

The electoral count for 1952 furnishes a much more illustrative view of the extent of Eisenhower's landslide victory. In this instance the electoral vote was split between the two major contenders for the presidency. No third party candidate received a share of the electors' vote. Eisenhower received 442 electoral votes to Stevenson's 89. Percentage-wise, the breakdown was 84 per cent for Eisenhower and 16 per cent for Stevenson.

A state-by-state analysis of the vote reveals that only nine of the forty-eight states were carried by the Democrats; the remaining thirty-nine fell into the Republican column. Of the nine states carried by the Democrats, two--West Virginia and Kentucky--were in the border areas and the remainder were in the deep South--Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia,

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[24] America Votes, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

TABLE 5

NATIONWIDE VOTE IN 1952 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Candidates	Party	Popular Vote	Percentage Popular Vote	Electoral Vote
Adlai E. Stevenson and John J. Sparkman	Democratic	27,314,992	44.38	89
Dwight D. Eisenhower and Richard M. Nixon	Republican	33,937,252	55.14	442
Vincent Hallinan and Charlotta Bass	Progressive	140,178	.23	
Stuart Hamblen and Enoch A. Holtwick	Prohibition	77,778	.12	
Eric Haas and Stephen Emery	Socialist-Labor	30,376	.05	
Darlington Hoopes and Samuel H. Friedman	Socialist	20,189	.03	
Douglas MacArthur and Vivian Kellems	Constitution	17,205	.03	
Farrel Dobbs and Myra Tanner Weiss	Socialist-Workers	10,306	.02	
Henry Kragewski and Frank Jenkins	Poor Man's	4,203	.01	
Totals		61,550,918	100.00	531

Louisiana, Mississippi, North and South Carolina. It is believed that these states voted for the Truman-Sparkman ticket largely because of the South's long standing tradition of voting Democratic. This position is taken because these seven deep South states are among those that gave the States' Rights ticket its greatest support in 1948.

Ironically, the Democrats failed to carry both Illinois and Missouri, the home states of Mr. Stevenson and Mr. Truman, respectively. The irony lies in the fact that it was the Illinois delegation at the National Convention that had worked so hard to draft Mr. Stevenson for the nomination; and it was Mr. Truman who had personally selected the Illinois Governor and had said that he would "take off my coat and go out to help him win."[25] Obviously Mr. Truman took his own home state for granted in that instance.

An interesting sidelight to the Presidential race can be found in the Massachusetts' Senate race. There the 35-year old Democratic Representative John F. Kennedy, handily defeated the incumbent, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., one of the top leaders in the Eisenhower drive for the

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[25] New York Times, July 26, 1952.

Republican nomination.[26]

Out of the nine border and deep South states that supported the Democrats in 1952, Georgia, where there was virtually no campaigning by the Democratic presidential nominee, gave Mr. Stevenson his largest win-margin. Ranked in order of the amount of support given to either candidate, Georgia was third, surpassed only by Vermont and North Dakota, both casting more than 70 per cent of their totals for Mr. Eisenhower. Election returns reveal that Georgians voted for Mr. Truman by a slightly better than two-to-one margin. This pattern followed closely the prediction of then-Governor Herman Talmadge, "a 'reluctant' voter for Governor Stevenson."[27]

In the 1952 election, Georgia counties once again voted strongly Democratic. Unofficial returns reveal that the Republicans had slim leads in only three of Georgia's 159 counties.[28] With two out of the thirteen precincts

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[26]Congressional Quarterly Service, op. cit., p. 19.

[27]Atlanta Journal, November 5, 1952.

[28]The writer regrets the fact that unofficial returns had to be relied upon in this instance, but no official returns for this election could be located at the several places consulted. It is felt, however, that these returns do give an adequate indication as to the outcome of the 1952 election.

reporting in a fourth county, the Republican candidate was but six votes behind, a deficit to be easily overcome considering the past tendencies of this county to vote Republican.

Returns from Fulton County showed Stevenson to be leading Eisenhower by quite an impressive margin. With better than two-thirds of the county's precincts reporting, the Democratic candidate's win-margin was better than 14,000 votes.[29]

Atlanta's Negro voter population was composed of slightly more than 22,000 voters, or about 25.8 per cent of the total electorate that exceeded 85,000.[30] In the six predominantly Negro precincts alone, more than 10,000 votes were cast in the 1952 election. Five of Atlanta's six Negro precincts cast substantial majorities for the Democratic candidates (see Table 6).[31]

The months leading up to the Presidential election of 1952 had been marked by considerable speculation as to

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[29] Atlanta Journal, November 5, 1952.

[30] Jack Walker, "Negro Voting in Atlanta: 1953-1961," Phylon, XXIV (Winter, 1963), 380.

[31] Source of Table 6: Atlanta Journal, November 5, 1952; unofficial election returns.

TABLE 6

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, NOVEMBER 4, 1952

Ward and Precinct	Total Votes Cast	Votes Cast for Stevenson		Votes Cast for Eisenhower		Total Per Cent
		Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	
1-C	1,412	1,098	77.76	314	22.24	100.00
3-A	363	300	82.61	63	17.39	100.00
3-B	1,965	1,337	68.04	628	31.96	100.00
3-E	1,166	873	74.88	293	25.12	100.00
3-H	776	700	90.20	76	9.80	100.00
7-A	4,805	1,568	32.63	3,237	67.37	100.00
Totals	10,487	5,876	56.22	4,611	43.78	100.00

the course of the Negro vote in that election. Although little attention was given to the southern Negro's vote, the general consensus leading up to the election was that the Negroes, despite the presence of Alabama Senator John Sparkman on the ticket, would vote Democratic because of the stronger civil rights plank in the Democratic platform. The fact that Sparkman was a southerner was brushed aside by pointing to the fact that Negroes since 1932 had supported three other southerners--Garner, Truman, and Barkley--for Vice-President; and with the exception of Garner, they had proved satisfactory.[32] The Negro press had also leaned toward the Democratic candidates in the months preceeding the election.[33]

The Presidential election of 1956

The 1956 Presidential campaign produced a cast of familiar faces. Contestants for the Democratic nomination were basically the same. The unsuccessful 1952 nominee, Adlai E. Stevenson, was first to announce his candidacy. The preferential primary choice of 1952, Estes Kefauver,

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[32]Armistead Scott Pride, "The Negro Vote: Ike or Adlai?," Nation, CLXXV (August 16, 1952), 126.

[33]Ibid., p. 124.

was second to enter the race; and finally, New York Governor Averell Harriman, entered the race early in January, 1956. Another Presidential hopeful of little consequence was Senate majority leader, Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas, who received backing from several southern leaders, but little support outside the South.

In late February, 1956, President Eisenhower announced his intention to seek a second term. California Senator William F. Knowland had earlier announced that he would seek the Republican nomination if Mr. Eisenhower were not to do so. With the President's announcement, however, he withdrew his candidacy, and from that time on there was no announced opposition to Mr. Eisenhower's re-nomination. He then went on to make impressive showings in all the pre-convention primaries he entered.

When the conventions assembled in August, selecting the presidential nominees was more or less matters of formality. Stevenson was approved by the Democrats, meeting at Chicago, on the first ballot with Harriman, former President Truman's choice, running a very poor second in the balloting. Eisenhower was chosen by acclamation one week later at the Republican's Convention at San Francisco's Cow Palace.

The most significant event at the 1956 Democratic

Convention was the selection of the Vice-Presidential candidate. Stevenson, in a departure from tradition, did not designate his running mate; instead, he left the choice up to the Convention. Consequently, a stiff contest followed, with Estes Kefauver barely winning the nomination over Massachusetts Senator John F. Kennedy on the second ballot.[34]

The significance of this contest for the vice-presidential nomination is that it marked the formal entry of Senator Kennedy into presidential politics. Kennedy's good showing convinced many of his backers that he could win despite being a Roman Catholic.

At their respective conventions, both parties incorporated somewhat modified civil rights planks into their platforms. The Republicans, taking a more definite stand on the issue than the Democrats, supported the enactment of the civil rights program presented earlier to the 84th Congress by President Eisenhower, and concurred in "the conclusion of the Supreme Court that its decision directing school desegregation should be accomplished with 'all deliberate speed' locally through federal district courts."[35]

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[34]Congressional Quarterly Service, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

[35]Kirk H. Porter and Bruce Johnson, National Party Platforms, 1840-1956 (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1956), p. 554.

The Democrats, on the other hand, taking a somewhat weaker stand, merely acknowledged Supreme Court rulings as "part of the law of the land,"[36] but rejected proposals to use force in implementing the Court's decisions.

As the 1956 election returns were finally counted, it was clearly evident that President Eisenhower had retained his office. Out of a slightly higher total vote than in 1952, Mr. Eisenhower won an even greater landslide victory than he had upon first being elected to office.

The total popular vote cast in 1956 was 62,053,908.[37] Mr. Eisenhower, with 35.6 million votes, captured the largest popular vote total in history. He carried forty-one states with a total of 457 electoral votes. Mr. Stevenson, with slightly more than 26 million votes, ran somewhat behind his 1952 total. The final vote showed that he had captured a majority in only seven states, two less than his earlier total. Aside from Missouri, which was won from the Republicans, all of the states carried by Mr. Stevenson were in the deep South and all had voted Democratic four years previously. Once again Georgia gave Stevenson his greatest

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[36] Ibid., p. 542.

[37] America Votes, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

TABLE 7

NATIONWIDE VOTE IN 1956 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Candidates	Party	Popular Vote	Percentage Popular Vote	Electoral Vote
Adlai E. Stevenson and Estes Kefauver	Democratic	26,035,504	41.97	73
Dwight D. Eisenhower and Richard M. Nixon	Republican	35,589,477	47.37	457
T. Coleman Andrews and Thomas H. Werdel	Constitution	176,887	.29	
Harry F. Byrd and William E. Jenner	States' Rights	134,132	.21	
Eric Hass and George Cozzini	Socialist-Labor	44,443	.07	
Enoch A. Holtwick and Edwin M. Cooper	Prohibition	41,937	.07	
Farrell Dobbs and Myra T. Weiss	Socialist-Workers	7,795	.01	
Darlington Hoopes and Samuel H. Friedman	Socialist	2,121	.00	
Henry Krajewski and Anne Marie Yezo	American Third Party	1,829	.00	
Geralk L. K. Smith and Charles F. Robertson	Christian Nationalist	8	.00	
Totals		62,026,908	99.99	530

win-margin in the nation, although falling off a few percentage points from the 1952 total. Mr. Stevenson's electoral vote total was seventy-three. Although the total electoral votes in the seven states he carried amounted to seventy-four, one elector in Alabama cast his vote for Alabama Circuit Judge Walter B. Jones and Georgia Governor Herman Talmadge.[38]

So strong was the Republican sentiment in 1956 that Mr. Eisenhower was able to carry the Deep South state of Louisiana by an 85,000-vote plurality. Not since 1876, when Rutherford B. Hayes eked out a one-vote electoral victory over the Democrat, Samuel J. Tilden, had Louisiana voted Republican. This feat in 1956 is attributed largely to the increased Republican vote among Negroes.[39]

In keeping with the nation-wide trend, the total vote cast by Georgians was slightly higher in 1956 than it was in 1952. In the 1956 election, all but eleven of Georgia's 159 counties voted solidly Democratic. In the eleven counties that were exceptions, only three were carried

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[38]Charles A. H. Thomson and Frances M. Shattuck, The 1956 Presidential Campaign (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1960), p. 345.

[39]Ibid., p. 353.

by the Republicans by substantial majorities. In the remaining eight counties that voted Republican, shifts of but fourteen or fewer votes would have put three of them into the Democratic column.

Election results from Fulton County reveal that the Democrats had an 11,000-vote majority, for 56 per cent of the County's vote as compared to 44 per cent for the Republicans. Precinct returns from the city of Atlanta proper show that the Democratic win-margin was slightly less. The Democrats barely managed to eke out a 4,316-vote plurality in that race.

It can also be seen from these returns that Negroes in Atlanta took a more or less complete turn away from the Democrats in this election. They supported President Eisenhower by better than 80 per cent in all but three of the eleven predominantly Negro precincts in the city, two of which, 1-C and 6-I, had a white voter population of 31 and 42 per cent, respectively, in 1956 (see Table 8).[40]

These figures pose quite a contrast to the results of the 1952 Presidential election wherein Negroes in five of

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[40]Official Returns from 1956 General election. Courtesy of Mr. Neill Leach, Member of the Democratic Executive Committee (State).

Atlanta's six predominantly Negro precincts voted heavily for Stevenson. The highest percentage of Negro votes cast for Eisenhower in that election was 32 per cent, quite a contrast to his lowest percentage of 61 in 1956.

It is interesting to note here that the Negro vote in the 1956 Presidential election could conceivably have carried the city of Atlanta for Eisenhower. As mentioned earlier, Stevenson's win-margin in Atlanta was but a slim 4,316 votes. Consequently, a shift of a mere 2,158 votes would have given Atlanta to Eisenhower. The votes cast for Stevenson in the predominantly Negro precincts alone were enough to effect such a change. Had such a shift in the Negro vote taken place, Eisenhower would have had a 758-vote plurality in Atlanta.

Moreover, some 3,616 Negroes in the eleven predominantly Negro precincts failed to show up at the polls on that election day. Had these voters turned out, and had they voted for Eisenhower, his possible win-margin in Atlanta would have surpassed Stevenson's actual win-margin.

It is felt that Negroes supported the Republicans to such a great extent in this election largely because of the failure of the Democrats to take a more positive stand on the civil rights issue. Stevenson's policy of "gradualism,"

TABLE 8

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, NOVEMBER 6, 1956

Ward and Precinct	Total Votes Cast	Votes Cast for Stevenson		Votes Cast for Eisenhower		Total Per Cent
		Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	
1-C	1,183	465	39.30	718	60.69	99.99
3-A	340	61	17.94	279	82.05	99.99
3-B	1,783	232	13.01	1,551	86.98	99.99
3-E	1,671	363	21.72	1,308	78.27	99.99
3-H	1,436	204	14.21	1,232	85.79	100.00
3-K	816	98	12.00	718	87.99	99.99
4-I	1,263	202	15.99	1,061	84.00	99.99
6-H	1,436	210	14.63	1,226	85.37	100.00
6-I	1,189	379	31.88	810	68.12	100.00
7-A	1,162	162	13.94	1,000	86.05	99.99
7-D	1,447	161	11.13	1,286	88.87	100.00
Totals	13,726	2,537	19.21	11,189	80.78	99.99

with the year 1963 earmarked as a possible target date for complete integration of the schools, irritated many Negroes.[41] Such a policy did not seem amicable to Negroes at a time when Autherine Lucy was being escorted, "in a most ungradual way,"[42] from the campus of the University of Alabama, and the Till case in Mississippi, and the Montgomery bus boycott loomed large in the minds of Negroes.

One significant outcome of the Eisenhower victory in 1956 is that it marked the first time since pre-New Deal days that Negroes en masse had voted Republican.[43] Thus, for the first time since 1932, Eisenhower had successfully penetrated the coalition that had been established between Negroes and the Democratic Party.

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[41] Robert Bendiner, "The Negro Vote and the Democrats," The Reporter, XIV (May 31, 1956), 10.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., p. 8.

IV. THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1960

The 1960 Presidential campaign was officially launched by the Democrats, when Minnesota Senator Hubert H. Humphrey announced his intention to enter at least four of the upcoming preferential primaries.[1] Humphrey's announcement was followed immediately by Massachusetts' Senator John F. Kennedy on January 2, 1960.[2] Kennedy, too, planned to enter the spring primaries, beginning with the one in New Hampshire.

Two other contenders for the Democratic nomination were Senators Stuart Symington of Missouri, and Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas. Both men announced their candidacies late so as to avoid the spring primaries. Symington, who had the backing of former President Harry Truman, announced his candidacy in late March,[3] while Senate majority leader Johnson, who had received support for the Presidential

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[1] New York Times, December 31, 1959.

[2] Ibid., January 3, 1960

[3] Ibid., March 25, 1960.

nomination from Southern party leaders at the 1956 Convention, announced his candidacy at the Los Angeles Sports Arena.[4]

A "dark horse" candidate in contention for the nomination was the two-time presidential nominee Adlai E. Stevenson. Because Stevenson had suffered two previous defeats, he, like Symington, Johnson, and Humphrey in the early months of the campaign, was counting on a convention deadlock that would propel him into the nomination once again.[5]

This field of announced Democratic hopefuls in 1960 represented a departure from the established tendency in the Democratic party of selecting state governors as presidential nominees. Instead, all four of the chief contenders for the nomination by the Democrats in 1960 were senators. Moreover, they were all relatively young senators, none having completed two full Senate terms. Johnson and Humphrey were first elected to the Senate in 1949, while Kennedy and Symington were elected in 1953. Senator Symington, at 59, represented the eldest of the four chief

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[4] Ibid., July 6, 1960.

[5] Ibid., March 25, 1960.

contenders, and Senator Kennedy, at 43, was the youngest.

The Republicans in 1960 were also confronted with the task of selecting a new presidential nominee. The incumbent President, Mr. Eisenhower, was not eligible to seek a third term because of the constitutional limitations imposed by the Twenty-second Amendment. Consequently, the role of Republican standard-bearer fell to Vice-President Richard M. Nixon, who had been established as Eisenhower's heir-apparent before the 1956 presidential campaign.[6]

Vice-President Nixon's nomination had become somewhat a matter of certainty long before the Republicans assembled at Chicago's International Amphitheatre. The only potential threats that had arisen to his nomination came from New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater. Both men had been brought to the attention of party leaders by virtue of the impressive victories they had won two years earlier in contests for their respective offices. They represented both extremes of the party--Rockefeller, the liberal, and Goldwater, the conservative.

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[6]Paul T. David, "The Presidential Nominations," The Presidential Election and Transition, 1960-1961, ed. by Paul T. David (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1961), pp. 1-2.

The threats posed to Nixon's candidacy by both Rockefeller and Goldwater were mild ones. After failing to get the desired support for the 1960 Presidential nomination, Rockefeller announced on December 26, 1959, that he had made a "definite and final" decision not to seek his party's presidential nomination because he wished to avert a "massive" fight at the convention. He also announced an "absolutely definite" resolve not to be the party's candidate for Vice-President."[7]

Goldwater's candidacy likewise represented no major threat to Nixon. His support was concentrated in a few conservative areas of the country, mainly in the South and Southwest,[8] and instead of challenging Nixon for the nomination, Goldwater emphasized support of his candidacy.

From the very beginning the Kennedy forces knew that their man would have very little chance of getting the nomination if the convention should deadlock. Therefore they had no alternative but to try for an all-out victory on the first or second ballot.[9] With remarkable precision

[7] New York Times, December 27, 1959.

[8] David, op. cit., p. 4.

[9] Austin Ranney, "The 1960 Democratic Convention: Los Angeles and Before," Inside Politics: The National Conventions, 1960, ed. by Paul Tillett (New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1962), p. 8.

the group of amateur strategists that Kennedy had assembled set out to achieve this goal.

When the Democratic convention opened in Los Angeles on July 11, 1960, the chance of the nomination going to Senator Kennedy seemed almost a certainty. Of the 761 convention votes required for the nomination, Kennedy was assured of more than 700 votes as the convention opened its first session. His nearest competition for the nomination was Senator Johnson, whose actual total of votes at roughly 300 fell far short of his pre-convention estimate of 502½.[10]

On July 13, 1960, the Democratic National Convention held its first ballot. When the balloting was completed, the final vote tally showed that Kennedy had 806 votes and the nomination. His nearest competitor, Johnson, had 409 votes. Symington had 86 votes, Stevenson 79½, and the remaining 140½ votes were scattered.[11]

Following his successful nomination, Senator Kennedy began to confer with party leaders about the selection of a Vice Presidential candidate. Prime consideration was given

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[10] Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1960 (New York: The New American Library, 1961), pp. 186, 158.

[11] Ibid., p. 195.

to Lyndon Johnson, who ran second in the convention balloting, but had once remarked that he would "never, never, never trade his senatorial vote for the Vice Presidential gavel."[12] Nevertheless, an early-morning telephone call from Kennedy to Johnson on July 14, apparently confirmed the decision.

Labor leaders in the party looked with disdain upon Johnson's selection; however, in their opinion his presence on the ticket would possibly alienate the northern Negro vote which could be critical in any close election. Even so, it later became evident that Johnson's presence on the ticket had proved to be the essential element in holding most of the traditionally Democratic South to the party.[13]

In general, the Republican events leading up to, and to some extent including, the National Convention were keyed to a much lower tempo then those found in the Democratic party. As if to exemplify this low key of events, Vice-President Nixon did not even trouble himself to deliver a formal statement of his intent to seek the nomination. This duty was assigned to an aide, who, on January 9, 1960,

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[12] Ibid., pp. 199-200.

[13] Ibid., pp. 198-204.

announced that the Vice-President was a candidate, and that his name would be entered in several of the Presidential primaries.[14]

Nixon faced virtually no opposition in the preconvention primaries he entered. Consequently, delegates were usually pledged to his support, and by late May, 1960, Nixon, according to Associated Press figures, had more than the necessary majority of the 1331 delegates pledged to his cause.[15]

The Republican Convention which convened at Chicago in late July was just as pro-Nixon as had been events leading up to the convention. When, on Wednesday evening, July 27, Richard M. Nixon's name was placed in nomination for the presidency, he received 1321 of the convention's delegate votes. The remaining were cast by the Louisiana delegation for Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater. The Arizona delegation then moved to give the nomination to Nixon by acclamation.[16]

The following day, Mr. Nixon's choice of Vice Presidential candidate, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., was confirmed by

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[14]David, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

[15]Ibid., p. 4.

[16]New York Times, July 28, 1960.

the convention.[17]

Aside from the two major parties' candidates, the 1960 Presidential campaign found the usual array of minor party candidates in contention for the nation's highest office. Perennial candidates Farrell Dobbs and Eric Hass, representing the Socialist Workers and Socialist Labor parties, respectively, were once again in the race. Senator Harry F. Byrd who had been in two of the four Presidential campaigns since 1944, was once again pledged to the southern cause in 1960. Arkansas Governor Orval E. Faubus, recently re-elected to a two-year term, was also in the race, representing the National States' Right's Party.[18]

The remaining minor party candidates were largely newcomers to the presidential campaign. As is the case with virtually every presidential campaign, the multiplicity of these parties and the different party labels under which candidates appeared in the various states makes it rather difficult to pinpoint them all. Moreover, it is difficult

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[17] Ibid., July 29, 1960.

[18] Svend Petersen, A Statistical History of the American Presidential Elections (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1963), pp. 7-10. Richard M. Scammon, American Votes (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962), IV, p. 2.

to consider the minor parties very seriously in that often they give the appearance of being slates which are hurriedly thrown together, and the candidates obviously have no intention of winning. This belief is in part substantiated by the fact that one particular minor party candidate in the 1960 campaign appeared as the vice-presidential nominee for two different parties.[19] Nevertheless, Table 9 (below) contains the names of all those of the vote in 1960.

Campaign issues

Not since 1928 had either of the major parties nominated a Roman Catholic for the presidency. In that year, the Democrats nominated Alfred E. Smith of New York to head their national ticket. Smith was subsequently dealt a resounding defeat at the polls by Herbert C. Hoover. His Catholicism, although not the only issue involved, figured heavily in that defeat.[20]

By the time of the 1960 presidential campaign, the percentage of Roman Catholics in the nation's total population had greatly increased; and the general consensus of the

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[19]Scammon, Ibid.

[20]Key, Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups, p.204.

population seemed to be one of the greater religious tolerence. Nevertheless, the question of Kennedy's Catholicism was still of great consequence throughout the campaign. One of the main arguments put forth against his candidacy was that a Catholic president would be subject to the wishes of the Church. In effect, the United States would be governed by the Pope in Rome.

Kennedy could not evade nor suppress this issue in his campaign. He had been confronted with it once--in the May 10 West Virginia primary.[21] Catholics in West Virginia comprise only about 5 per cent of the total population; the remainder is made up mostly of fundamentalist Protestants, descendants of those pioneers who crossed the mountains with Bibles in one hand and rifles in the other. Consequently, pre-primary polls had shown Kennedy's religion to be a detriment to him. Despite this, however, Kennedy was successful in West Virginia, polling some 60 per cent of the total vote and carrying 48 of the state's 55 counties.[22]

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[21]For a running account of the events in the West Virginia primary, see White, op. cit., pp. 118-134. Except where otherwise noted, the following discussion is taken from those pages in White's book.

[22]Ranney, op. cit., p. 10.

Kennedy's upset victory in West Virginia had two significant results: first, it forced Minnesota Senator Humphrey--whom Kennedy had defeated in the primary of his neighboring state of Wisconsin--to formally withdraw from the campaign; and secondly, it proved for the first time to many party leaders that this particular Catholic candidate could win a lot of votes.[23]

Even with Kennedy's surprising victory in West Virginia, the question of his religion still hung in the air. Ultimately Kennedy had to face this issue head-on, or be doomed to defeat; and on September 12, 1960, at Houston, Texas, he appeared by invitation before the Greater Houston Ministerial Association to discuss his religion.[24]

In the Ballroom of Houston's Rice Hotel, Kennedy delivered a short speech, saying in part:

> . . . I believe in an America where the separation of Church and State is absolute--where no Catholic prelate would tell the President (should he be a Catholic) how to act. . .where no church or church school is granted any public funds or political preference--and where no man is denied public office merely because his religion differs from the President who might appoint him. . . .
> . . . . . .

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[23] Ibid.

[24] White, op. cit., p. 296.

> That is the kind of America in which I believe. And. . .the kind of Presidency in which I believe. . . .[25]

When Kennedy had finished answering questions regarding his remarks, he had also successfully clarified his views of the role of the present-day Catholic in a pluralist society. He had also won considerable applause and personal sympathy from an audience which was almost hostile at the outset. Even so, the effect of this showing in the November election could not yet be measured.[26]

Aside from the Roman Catholic issue in the campaign, the nation's domestic and external affairs were also in somewhat of a turmoil, and would weigh heavily in the outcome of the upcoming election. Considering the events which had transpired since the spring of 1960, pre-convention polls had indicated that foreign policy might be the major concern of the voters. Since May, the Soviets had shot down an American reconnaisance plane and imprisoned the first acknowledged spy ever seized in the Soviet Union, the Paris Summit Conference had collapsed, President

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[25]Taken from text of Senator Kennedy's remarks on church and state. Delivered September 12, 1960, to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, Houston, Texas. Reprinted in White, op. cit., pp. 437-439.

[26]White, Ibid., p. 298.

Eisenhower had to cancel a proposed visit to Japan because of widespread anti-American riots, and the newly independent Congo and the Castro regime in nearby Cuba presented problems with which a new administration would have to deal.[27]

On the domestic scene, too, there were trouble spots. The economy had been described by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York as being at a high level; employment was at a peak, but so was unemployment; steel production fell off during the summer, and farm income was still low.[28] Moreover, as if to add to the already existing worries of the candidates, both presidential aspirants, as well as the Democratic vice presidential nominee, had to return to Washington for a three-week post-convention session of Congress, instead of being able to go out and immediately begin their campaigns.[29]

One of the most important issues in the 1960 Presidential campaign--one which affects so great a portion of

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[27]Stanley Kelly, Jr., "The Presidential Campaign," The Presidential Election and Transition, 1960-1961, ed. by Paul T. David (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1961), p. 59.

[28]Ibid., p. 60.

[29]White, op. cit., pp. 284-285.

the nation's population that it must inevitably occupy a prominent position in virtually all national elections--was that of civil rights. In its 1960 platform, the Democrats, despite the presence of Johnson on the ticket, seemed decidedly in favor of Negro rights. In their 1960 platform "The Rights of Man"[30] as it was called, the Democrats supported demonstrations by Southern Negroes at segregated lunch counters and promised federal intervention in the Negro's quest for full equality in job opportunities. Moreover, the Democratic vice presidential candidate, as Senate majority leader had succeeded through his peculiar methods of influencing Senators in bringing about the open discussion of civil rights between Northern and Southern Congressmen; and he managed to secure the passage of minimal civil rights legislation during the eight year period to 1960.[31]

For the Republican, the civil rights issue proved to be a particularly thorny one. The struggle over the adoption of an acceptable civil rights program proved to be the

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[30]David (ed.), op. cit., p. 33.

[31]White, op. cit., p. 156.

main contest at Chicago.[32] The original Republican platform contained what Barry Goldwater called a "moderate" view on civil rights. The party had neither expressed support of lunch counter "sit-ins" nor had it taken a definite stand on guaranteeing equal job opportunities for Negroes.

As it was, the Republican platform plank on civil rights was accepted by the more conservative element of the party. In retrospect, it is believed by some conservatives in the party that in its original form the Republican's civil rights plank could have possibly won the 1960 election for the party, in that it would have enabled Nixon to carry the deep south. Nixon, however, was faced with the dilemma of placating two opposing views within the party on the issue of civil rights. The conservative element in the party advocated keeping the platform in its original form and possibly carrying the South, but alienating the northern Negro (who normally votes Democratic by overwhelming margins, and whose vote at that time was estimated to be critical in six of the eight most populous states). On the other hand,

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[32]Karl A. Lamb, "Civil Rights and the Republican Platform: Nixon Achieves Control," Inside Politics: The National Conventions, 1960, ed. by Paul Tillet (New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1962), p. 83.

the liberal element in the party felt that Nixon should try to outbid the Democrats for the Northern Negro vote (which may have won the election for him) by matching their position on civil rights. This position alienated the conservative Republican element.[33]

It was the liberal view that ultimately prevailed in the Republican camp.[34] Nixon's views had been largely influenced by Governor Rockefeller and the possible threat of losing New York state in the election. Consequently, on July 22-23, he and Rockefeller conferred in New York City. Out of this meeting arose a 14-point statement of policy essentials closely paralleling Rockefeller's views.[35]

Campaign strategies

The 1960 Presidential campaign is marked by five distinct phases, covering the period from the end of the party conventions to the eve of the November election.[36]

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[33]White, op. cit., pp. 233-234.

[34]As a result of the meeting between Nixon and New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller on July 23, 1960, the party's moderate position on civil rights was substituted by the more liberal view which Rockefeller had urged Nixon to adopt. See, Ibid.; also, Appendix B.

[35]Ibid., pp. 232, 434-36.

[36]The following discussion is based largely upon, Stanley Kelley, Jr., op. cit., pp. 74-87.

The first phase, lasted from the end of the party conventions until the day before the scheduled summer session of Congress convened. The summer congressional session, lasting from August 8 to September 1, was the second phase. On September 2, the formal campaign began. This third phase lasted until September 25, the day before the first television debate. The great debates themselves, lasting from September 26 to October 21 marked the fourth phase; and finally, the fifth phase, or homestretch, lasted from October 22 to November 7.

Campaign organization.--During this phase of organization and planning, the candidates prepared the groundwork for their respective campaigns. This was also a time for settling old rivalries within the parties.

This job of mending differences proved more difficult for Kennedy than for Nixon. Rockefeller and Goldwater had already backed out of the campaign and pledged their support for Nixon's candidacy, although Goldwater later balked at the revised civil rights plank adopted at the convention. Kennedy, on the other hand, went into the convention with Johnson, Symington and Stevenson still in tontention for the nomination. Consequently, after his successful nomination, he had to make amends with his rivals

and try to unite them in support behind his candidacy. With Johnson, this was no problem; he had been brought into the Kennedy fold by the vice presidential nomination. Eventually, Symington, Stevenson, and even former President Truman were brought into the Kennedy camp; and the candidate made a special trip to Hyde Park to get Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt to support his candidacy.

The summer Congressional session.--The phase found three of the parties' four candidates trapped in a baring session of Congress--Nixon as Senate president, Johnson as majority leader, and Kennedy as junior Senator from Massachusetts.

During the course of the summer session, Congress wrapped up its left-over spring business, indicating passage of a treaty on Anarctica and a foreign aid appropriations bill. Perhaps the most significant outcome of this session was the mangling of Kennedy's legislative proposals.[37] Some

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[37]Among the Kennedy legislative proposals defeated in the August, 1960, special session of Congress were those designed to: tie medical care for the aged to Social Security; provide a minimum wage of $1.25 an hour; provide federal aid to education by making grants to the states and allowing them to determine whether the money should be used for teachers' salaries or new schools. Despite the defeat of these measures by Congress, Kennedy again pledged himself to them during the 1960 campaign. See, White, op. cit., p. 285; New York Times, November 13, 1960.

of them managed to squeak through the Senate, but none survived the House. As if to add insult to injury, Kennedy was also disturbed by the fact that Nixon, uninformed by the need of daily attendance at Senate sessions, had already begun his campaign.[38]

The formal campaign: first part.--Congress adjourned on September 1, on the following day the 1960 presidential campaign formally began. During this phase both candidates barnstormed the entire country, speaking as many as twelve times a day. It is during this phase that Kennedy, addressing the Greater Houston, Texas, Ministerial Association, met head-on with the religious issue in the campaign. It is also during this phase, that Soviet Premier Kruschev visited the United Nations. Nixon saw an opportunity to put Kennedy at a disadvantage by suggesting that he not discuss America's ills while the Soviet Premier was in the United States. Nixon's strategy failed, however, and Kennedy continued his "loss of prestige" theme.

The great debates.--The series of four television debates dominated activity during the fourth phase of the campaign. In this unprecedential series of encounters, the

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[38]White, op. cit., p. 285.

two candidates were on nationally televised programs during the course of which questions were posed by newsmen and the two candidates were allowed to refute each others answers.[39]

Both sides claimed victory in the debates. Republicans blamed poor lighting for Nixon not being at his best during the first debate, but they held that he was better than Kennedy during the other three. The Democrats, on the other hand, claimed that their candidate was not as young, inexperienced and immature as Nixon had claimed.

Perhaps the major accomplishment of the Great Debaters was that they furnished the American voter a candid view of two men under stress, and allowed them to decide which styles of performance under stress they would prefer in their next president.[40]

Homestretch.--When the series of television debates ended on October 21, the candidates entered the campaign's homestretch. Kennedy continued his predictions of an economic recession, and to emphasize America's loss of prestige. The latter contention was supported by United States

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[39]Congressional Quarterly Service, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

[40]White, op. cit., p. 332.

Information Agency reports of America's declining prestige abroad that were leaked to the press during the latter part of the campaign.

Nixon, on the other hand, began a stepped-up attack on his opponent, going to the extent of accusing him of "barefaced lies."[41] He also began to place greater emphasis on his association with the Eisenhower administration, and the importance of his role in the administration's decisions. In an effort to bring Kennedy's Catholicism to the forefront just before the election, an attempt was made to make October 30, Reformation Sunday, a day to unite Protestants against Kennedy.

In a last minute move, Kennedy attempted an all-out gamble to attract Negro support. During the last part of October, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., had been arrested and jailed in Georgia for a traffic violation. While Kennedy telephoned Mrs. King to extend his sympathy, his brother, Robert, made inquiries into King's right to bail. Consequently, King's parents endorsed the candidate, and Kennedy forces took the initiative to make this fact widely known among Negroes.[42]

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[41] Ibid., p. 343.

[42] Ibid., p. 363.

Vice-President Nixon failed to make a statement concerning the incident, perhaps because he, like Kennedy, was gambling on the support of Negroes and southern whites, and felt that such a statement would be a detriment to him. The reason for his inaction, in this instance, may also be found in the contradictory statements his running mate Lodge had promised in Harlem that a Negro would be in the Nixon Cabinet; in Virginia, he said that he could make no such promise.[43]

The 1960 presidential campaign was for the most part a hectic and closely contested one. By election day, 1960, both candidates had travelled extensively. Kennedy had covered all of 75,000 miles, visiting 46 states in the process, while Nixon had visited all 50 states, but for a slightly smaller total of 65,000 miles.[44] Both candidates had been widely exposed to the public, either being seen or heard in person, or through the media of radio and television. Moreover, for the first time in history the two major party presidential candidates had met face-to-face before a national television audience to debate the issues

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[43] Ibid., pp. 335-336.

[44] Ibid., p. 356.

in the campaign. The 1960 campaign is also reported to have been the most expensive on record.

Results of the 1960 Presidential election

January 20, 1961, marked the end of the Eisenhower years. On that day, John F. Kennedy became 34th President of the United States. At 43 years of age, he became the youngest man ever elected to that office. The following discussion is an analysis of the structure of that vote which transformed Kennedy from Massachusetts' junior Senator into President of the United States by one of the slimmest margins of victory in this century.

On November 8, 1960, 68,838,979 American voters--roughly 65 per cent of the 107 million eligible American voters--cast their ballots for their choice as the next President of the United States. This figure represented the greatest turnout of American voters in the history of the country.

The 112,803-vote plurality by which Massachusetts Senator Kennedy emerged victorious from the contest, was the smallest presidential win-margin of the 20th century. By way of comparison, the narrowness of the candidate's win-margin is surpassed only by three national elections in the

100-year period immediately preceeding the 1960 election, all of which occurred during the eight-year period between 1880 and 1888.[45]

In the 1880 contest, between Winfield J. Hancock and James A. Garfield, the victorious candidate won a popular vote plurality of only 9,464 votes. His electoral margin, however, was 214-155. In the 1884 election, Grover Cleveland defeated James G. Blaine by 23,005 votes, with an electoral split of 219-182. The third election illustrates one of the strange phenomena of American electoral politics. In that 1888 contest, the incumbent President, Cleveland, increased his popular vote plurality over the previous election by some 77,451 votes, but was defeated in the Electoral College by Benjamin Harrison who polled 233 votes to his 168.[46]

The Presidential election of 1876 also demands consideration in this light. In one respect it is even closer than the 1960 election. Although the victorious candidate, Rutherford B. Hayes, had a 264,000-vote plurality, more than twice that of Kennedy, he barely eked out an electoral

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[45] Petersen, op. cit., pp. 48-56.

[46] Ibid.

victory of 185-184 over the defeated Samuel J. Tilden. So close was this election that a shift of only 464 votes in the state of Florida would have given that state's four electoral votes to Tilden and thereby the election.[47]

The final vote totals in the 1960 Presidential election shows that the victorious Kennedy-Johnson ticket polled 34,221,349 votes from 23 states with a total of 303 electoral votes. The Nixon-Lodge team carried 26 states with a total of 220 electoral votes.[48] Their popular vote total was 34,108,546. As Table 9 illustrates, the two major candidates received respectively, 49.7 and 49.5 per cent of the total vote cast. The remaining .08 per cent was divided among the thirteen other minor party candidates. It will also be noted here that Kennedy's electoral vote total gave him a more impressive margin of victory, capturing some 62 per cent of the electoral vote as opposed to 36 per cent for Nixon.

By some measures, the Nixon-Lodge team should have won the 1960 election. For instance, Nixon carried 26 of

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[47] Ibid., pp. 45-47.

[48] A Republican elector in the State of Oklahoma cast his vote for Senator Harry F. Byrd, thereby raising his total electoral vote to 15, and lowering Nixon's to 219.

TABLE 9

NATIONWIDE VOTE IN 1960 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Candidates	Party	Popular Vote	Percentage Popular Vote	Electoral Vote
John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson	Democratic	34,221,349	49.70	303 (62%)
Richard M. Nixon and Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.	Republican	34,108,546	49.50	219 (36%)
Harry F. Byrd	Independent	404,298	.60	15 (2%)
Unpledged Electors (Louisiana)	States' Rights Democrats	169,572	.20	
Eric Hass and George Cozzini	Socialist Labor	47,522	.00	
Rutherford L. Decker and E. Harold Munn	Prohibition	46,220	.00	
Orval E. Faubus and John G. Grommelin	National States' Rights	44,967	.00	
Farrell Dobbs and Myra T. Weiss	Socialist Workers	40,175	.00	

TABLE 9--Continued

Candidates	Party	Popular Vote	Percentage Popular Vote	Electoral Vote
Charles L. Sullivan and Merritt B. Curtis	Constitutional	18,169	.00	
Joseph B. Lee and Kent H. Courtney	Conservative	8,708	.00	
C. Benton Coiner and Edward J. Silverman	Virginia Conservative	4,204	.00	
Lar Daly and B. M. Miller	Tax Cut	1,767	.00	
Clennon King and Reginald Carter	Independent Afro-American	1,485	.00	
Merritt B. Curtis and B. M. Miller	Constitution	1,401	.00	
	Independent American Party	539	.00	
Totals		68,838,979	100.00	537 (100%)

the nation's states as compared to only 23 for Kennedy. The remaining state, Mississippi, elected a slate of unpledged electors; but the Democrats did manage to capture a majority of the state's two-party vote.

When the country is divided into its eight major geographical areas, it can be seen that Nixon carried five of these as compared to Kennedy's three.[49] This does not necessarily mean that Nixon polled a majority of the votes in all of the states in these areas. It does mean, however, that his combined total of votes for the entire geographical area surpassed that of Kennedy. The same thing applies to Kennedy in the geographical areas that he carried.

Of the five geographical areas carried by Nixon, the five traditionally Republican farm states returned his greatest margin of victory. Here Nixon won by a margin of some 598,000 votes. The eight-state Rocky Mountain area registered the next greatest amount of support for the Republican ticket. Here, Nixon out-polled his Democratic opponent by 192,313 votes. In the traditionally Democratic and highly-Protestant five-state area bordering on the Old

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[49]The following discussion is taken from White, op. cit., pp. 393-395.

South, Mr. Nixon led by a margin of 263,033 votes. In the six Midwestern states, widely acknowledged as the Republican Party's greatest single base of support, Mr. Nixon won by a 462,778 vote plurality. Finally, Mr. Nixon did worse by far in the five Pacific Coast states. Here, in the candidate's home area, he only polled some 107,000 votes more than his opponent.

In the three geographical areas carried by Kennedy, his home area of New England gave him his greatest margin of victory--603,587 votes more than his opponent. When compared with the total votes cast, Kennedy's victory margin here is only slightly less impressive than Nixon's in the farm state area. Ten states in the traditionally Democratic Deep South ranked next in their support of the Democratic candidate. Here, Kennedy polled better than 530,000 votes more than Nixon. Finally, the five Middle Atlantic states, three of which have a combined electoral total of 93 votes, gave Kennedy a 601,570 vote lead over Nixon.

Aside from these facts, the tide of the 1960 election could easily have been turned on any one or combination of, a significant number of "ifs." For instance, if President Eisenhower had been used earlier, and more extensively throughout the Nixon campaign, or if he had been used in

certain areas as opposed to others, the outcome of the election might possibly have been changed. On the other hand, if Nixon had definitely decided whether he wanted the northern Negro vote or the southern white vote, perhaps he would not have been prone to make the contradictory statements he did while campaigning in Harlem and Virginia regarding the appointment of a Negro to his cabinet upon election. Such a statement apparently cast doubts on both sides. Also, if Mixon had moved in a straight-forward manner, as did the Kennedys, in the arrest in Georgia of civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, Jr., he may have captured a greater share of the Negro vote.[50]

Considering the closeness of the election, and the possible avenues by which Nixon may have been victorious, its outcome can be attributed to but one thing--better planning and organization on the part of Kennedy forces. Despite the narrowness of his victory margin, the Kennedy strategy afforded him the right amount of votes in the right places to turn the election tide in his favor.[51]

In a statement made during the early part of the

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[50] Ibid., pp. 350, 395.

[51] Ibid.

summer, 1960, Negro Representative Adam Clayton Powell of New York said that Senator Kennedy "could not carry the Negro vote" in the November election. Moreover, for a New Englander, "he had a 'bad civil-rights record.'"[52] This statement is indicative of Negro sentiment for Kennedy at that time; and as he entered the National Convention at Los Angeles he was by far the least popular among Negroes of all the Democratic hopefuls, including--in some circles--Southerner, Lyndon B. Johnson.

Nevertheless, determination, hard work, and clever strategy on the part of the Kennedy organization combined to change this attitude among Negroes for the candidate. Even Representative Powell, after "much negotiation," had changed his opinion of the candidate by mid-September.[53] The climax of this reversal in Negro opinion toward the candidate was perhaps reached with Kennedy's "eleventh-hour" phone call to Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr. concerning the arrest of her husband. This move apparently effected a great change in Negro attitude toward Kennedy, and is considered

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[52]James Q. Wilson, "How Will the Negro Vote?," The Reporter, XXIII (October 13, 1960), 36.

[53]Ibid.

one of the single most important factors in turning that vote in his favor.[54]

The Kennedy strategy in trying to win Negro support was obviously effective. In the November election, Negroes voted overwhelmingly in his favor. Richard Scammon cites instances of northern Negro voting, wherein Kennedy outpolled his opponent by four and even five-to-one margins in certain predominantly Negro areas. The same is true, but to a greater extent, for the South and border state areas.[55]

Before turning now to a discussion of one particular instance of Negro voting in the South in 1960, namely, Atlanta, Georgia, it would be well to undertake a discussion of the state-wide election results in Georgia. A point worth noting here is that the state of Georgia has the best Democratic voting record in the United States. In the 24 presidential elections between 1868 and 1960, Georgia voted Democratic in each, including the 1948 election wherein the States' Rights Party furnished ample opportunity for dissatisfied Democrats to desert the Party. No other state,

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[54]White, op. cit., pp. 363-364.

[55]Richard M. Scammon, "How the Negroes Voted," The New Republic, CXLIII (November 21, 1960), 9.

North or South, can match this record of support for the Democratic Party.

In 1960, Georgia was once again high on the list of Democratic support. Only two other states, Massachusetts and New York, gave the Democratic candidate a greater margin of victory over the Republican candidate. Neither state, however, gave the Democratic candidate a greater percentage of its vote than Georgia. The two states combined, each registering a larger total of popular votes than Georgia, gave the Democratic candidate an average of 56.4 per cent of their vote, whereas, Georgia gave Senator Kennedy 62.5 per cent of its vote.[56]

Again, in keeping with the national trend, the turn-out among Georgia voters was slightly higher in 1960 than in either of the three preceeding elections.

Generally, the margins of victory in the 148 counties carried by the Democrats in 1960 were substantial ones, reaching, percentage-wise, as high as the low 90's in three of Georgia's counties--Baker, Franklin, and Madison. In the remaining eleven counties not in the Democratic column

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[56]Ben W. Fortson, Secretary of State, Official State of Georgia Tabulation by Counties for Presidential, General Election, November 8, 1960.

in 1960, the Republican percentage reached a high of only 76.4 in but one county--Long.[57]

Election returns from Fulton County reflect the closeness of the election on the national level. Although the Democrats polled a majority of the votes in the county, Fulton voters did not manifest as much support for the Party as they had eight, or even four years earlier.

At the time of the 1960 Presidential election, there were roughly 34,400 Negroes registered to vote in the City of Atlanta. A total of 25,266 of these registered Negro voters were located in twelve predominantly Negro precincts, which are usually referred to as significant indicators of Negro sentiment in any major election.

The results of the 1960 election in Atlanta were rather surprising. Instead of voting overwhelmingly Democratic as did most other Negro areas in the country--and as many local political observers had predicted[58]--the twelve predominantly Negro precincts in Atlanta gave Vice-President Nixon a 2,847-vote plurality over Senator Kennedy. Table 10 contains a breakdown of the Kennedy-Nixon vote in the

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[57] Ibid.

[58] Atlanta Journal, November 9, 1960.

TABLE 10

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, NOVEMBER 9, 1960

Ward and Precinct	Total Vote Cast	Votes Cast for Kennedy		Votes Cast for Nixon		Total Per Cent
		Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	
1-C	1,398	651	46.57	747	53.43	100.00
3-A	389	159	40.87	230	59.13	100.00
3-B	2,060	788	38.25	1,272	61.75	100.00
3-E	2,414	1,038	43.90	1,376	56.10	100.00
3-H	1,849	752	40.67	1,097	59.33	100.00
3-K	1,103	423	38.35	680	61.65	100.00
3-N	631	313	49.61	318	50.39	100.00
4-I	1,681	680	40.45	1,001	59.55	100.00
6-H	1,692	746	44.09	946	55.91	100.00
6-I	1,649	788	47.79	861	52.21	100.00
7-A	2,093	910	43.48	1,183	56.52	100.00
7-D	1,838	677	36.83	1,161	63.17	100.00
Totals	18,797	7,925	42.16	10,872	57.84	100.00

predominantly Negro precincts.

So as not to mislead, the figures in Table 10 should be interpreted with caution. Superficial analysis of the data might lead one to believe that Negroes in Atlanta voted decidedly against the Democrats in that election. This assumption, however, is not wholly valid; it does not imply the extent to which Negroes shifted their party support over the eight-year period between 1952 and 1960. In order to get a truer understanding of the 1960 results, these figures must be interpreted in light of the results of the two preceeding Presidential elections.

When the data in Table 10 are compared with those in Tables 6 (1952) and 8 (1956), quite a different picture of the 1960 election is gotten. For instance, it can be readily seen that Negroes in Atlanta voted Democratic in 1952, then took a major turn away from that Party and voted decisively in favor of the Republican Party in 1956. The Republicans' victory margin was cut tremendously in 1960, however. Nevertheless, the Party did manage to poll some 15 per cent more of the Negro vote than did the Democrats.

By comparing Tables 8 and 10, it can be seen that in 1960 the Democrats ran some 23 per cent better in Negro precincts than in 1956. On the other hand, the Republicans, in

1960, whose candidate in 1956 outpolled his opponent better than four-to-one in Negro precincts, rank behind their 1956 vote total by the same margin.

Finally, a comparison of Tables 6 and 10 shows that in 1960, the Democratic candidate ran 13.87 per cent behind the Party's 1952 standard-bearer, while the Republican candidate in 1960 realized a similar increase over his Party's 1952 candidate.

A final consideration of the three elections between 1952 and 1960 is in order and will perhaps shed more light on the 1960 results. During this eight-year period, both major parties suffered losses--and gains at the other's expense--in Negro support in Atlanta. The Democrats, however, lost more of the Negro support in Atlanta between the years 1952 and 1956 (37.54 per cent) than did the Republicans between 1956 and 1960 (23.67 per cent). In 1960, the Republican candidate still out-polled the Democratic candidate in the Negro precincts, but the Democratic candidate made substantial inroads into gaining back that Negro support the Party lost in 1956. In the 1960 election, the Democratic candidate picked up the 23 per cent of the Negro vote that the Republicans had lost between 1956 and 1960. However, the candidate was still 13.87 per cent short of gaining back

all of his Party's original loss in Negro support.

It is interesting to note here that a shift of only 932 votes would have changed the outcome of the 1960 election in Fulton County. This change could have been effected easily in one of the predominantly Negro precincts alone--precinct 3-E, which cast a total of 1,038 votes for the victorious Kennedy. Had such a shift in the votes taken place--roughly .12 per cent of Kennedy's total in the Negro precincts--Nixon would have had a plurality in Fulton County in the barest sense.

Based on the above supposition, it seems safe to conclude that, although Atlanta Negroes did not give Kennedy a majority of their vote in 1960, they, nevertheless, provided the necessary margin by which Kennedy carried Fulton County in 1960.

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Since the adoption of the United States Constitution there have been restrictions imposed on the suffrage--either in the form of religious and property qualifications, sex, or race. Over the years, however, these restrictions were dropped one-by-one, and the suffrage was broadened, gradually being extended to more than the privileged class of adult white males.

The last of these bars to fall--and by far the most difficult change to effect--were the restrictions on race. Before these restrictions were dropped, however, the Negro had to endure a long and arduous struggle, beginning with the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, and climaxing some 75 years later with the Supreme Court's landmark decision in 1944.

The passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments had a profound effect on the southern states. The immediate reaction of white southerners was to write into state constitutions provisions designed to disfranchise Negroes, but at the same time remaining within the limits

of both Constitutional Amendments.

The states of Mississippi, South Carolina, and Louisiana led the way in devising constitutional schemes to disfranchise Negroes. Constructed so as to give the impression of applying to whites as well as Negroes, these provisions served as examples for other states to follow.

A classic example of this method of disfranchisement was found in the Louisiana constitution of 1898. That state's now-famous grandfather clause was amended into the Oklahoma constitution of 1910, and served as the basis of the first major twentieth century test of constitutional disfranchisement. This case, which came before the Court in 1915, also provided the avenue by which the NAACP first became actively involved in the long struggle for Negro rights. (Between the time of this case in 1915, and the ultimate fall of the white primary, the NAACP was to present twenty-two cases to the Supreme Court, winning twenty, losing one, and having one decision pending at the time of the Smith case.)

The case that obviously furnished the basis for one of the most serious obstacles to Negro suffrage in the United States was the 1920 Newberry case, wherein the Court apparently sanctioned the idea of a white primary. Working

on the implications of this case, the State of Texas in 1923 legislated to exclude Negroes from Democratic primaries in the state. This marked the first time that any state had taken direct action to openly disfranchise Negroes on the basis of race alone. The constitutionality of such a flagrant effort was thus open to challenge.

The series of white primary decisions that followed is now history. The NAACP played an active role in each, suffering but one defeat, the 1935 Grovey decision. The long-awaited moment of triumph, however, was reached in April, 1945, when the NAACP won a "smashing victory" before the Supreme Court, thus, effectively putting an end to the method by which Negroes had been legally barred from participation in the Democratic primaries.

a corrolary case to the Smith decision was the Primus King case in Georgia. The invalidation of the white primary and the war stimulus had produced a general resurgence of political activity among Negroes in the South. Nevertheless, Georgia's Negroes were still prohibited from participation in the state's Democratic primaries because the State Executive Committee refused to abide by the Smith Decision for the reason that Georgia officials were not parties to the case. The Federal District Court, however, overruled this

contention, and the Supreme Court sustained the action by refusing to review the case.

The action of the courts in the King case finally removed one of the long-standing bars to Negro participation in Georgia politics. It was not until some time later that Georgia's 3-2-1 County Unit Plan, which neutralized the effect of Negro voting, was finally discontinued. In the meantime, Negro voter registration in Georgia began to increase. The total Negro registration in Georgia shortly after the King Decision was about 125,000 more than any other southern state at that time. Five years later, that figure had increased by about 20,000 voters, surpassed only by the state of Texas. From that time on increases in Negro voter registration was gradual. Increases in Atlanta's Negro registration were rather substantial immediately following the King Decision, but later the rate of increase assumed a more gradual pace. To say that these Negroes were Democrats, as were the majority of those registered in other parts of the country, seems a needless repetition.

It is a widely known fact that Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal policies were instrumental in causing Negroes to bolt the Party that had granted them the right to vote and form a seemingly impregnable alliance with the

Democratic Party, even agreeing to the selection of several southerners as Vice Presidential candidates. Even Roosevelt's failure to end racial discrimination in the armed forces failed to daunt the spirits of Negroes in the support of the Democratic Party. This same tendency was evident throughout his successor's seven-year tenute in office. Any hope of reestablishing the old Republican-Negro alliance at this time seemed desparingly lost.

In 1952, however, when the Eisenhower Era finally brought an end to the New Deal and Fair Deal years, the Negroes' support of the Democratic ticket on the national level began a marked decline; Negroes reached a high point in defection in 1956. From 1936 to 1952, Negroes had given Democratic Presidential candidates better than 70 per cent of their votes. Then in 1956 the Democratic candidate ran far behind the Party's previous national average and also behind his 1952 average in Negro districts. In Atlanta, the trend was virtually the same. The Democratic candidate in 1956 ran some 37 percentage points behind his 1952 total in Atlanta. The 1960 Democratic candidate, however, apparently made up for this deficit in Negro support by gaining more than 23 per cent of that Negro vote in Atlanta that was lost between the first and second Stevenson attempts at the

Presidency.

One fact is obvious from the 1960 election results: that is, that the Negro vote was instrumental in the election of Senator John F. Kennedy. The Negro vote, however, can not be rightfully said to have been the deciding element in the outcome of the election; for Kennedy strategists put together a coalition of Negroes, Jews, Catholics and non-Catholics, labor, and southerners that defeated Vice-President Richard M. Nixon. Had any one of these groups gone the other way, Kennedy would have been defeated. Had any one not supported his candidacy to the extent that they did, the election tide would have been turned.

The obvious reversal of Negro voting trends in this election is the one factor--aside from the closeness of the election itself--that has created considerable debate. It is an established fact that in many areas carried by the Democrats in 1960 the Negro vote was great enough to provide the margin by which Kennedy won. For instance, in three northern states, New Jersey, Illinois, and Michigan, which gave Kennedy slightly better than a 100,000-vote plurality over Nixon, the Negro vote in those states exceeded 700,000. In New Jersey alone it was roughly 125,000. The same thing is true of the South. Missouri, for example, with some

100,000 Negro votes cast in 1960, gave Kennedy a 35,000-vote plurality. The statistical evidence in these cases, however, is not as important as a much more encompassing question; that is, why did the Negroes, who had voted so strongly Republican in 1956, make a turn away from that Party in 1960 and support the Democratic Presidential candidate?

It is felt that a major reason for this shift in the Negro vote in 1960 was the failure of the Republican Party to be more productive in the area of civil rights. Although the Republicans in their 1956 platform took a more positive stand on the issue than did the Democrats, the fact remained that both parties had still adopted somewhat weakened planks on civil rights. And as the Eisenhower years progressed, the exact position of the Republican Party on civil rights became more uncertain. Another factor aiding Kennedy's cause among Negroes was that by October, 1960, unemployment in the nation had increased by about 200,000. October is generally considered a month wherein the unemployment rate drops by about that margin. To Negroes, who are generally the last in line for jobs, this was of vital importance.

Another possible explanation of Kennedy's appeal to

Negroes may well have been found in the image he portrayed. As one writer has said, Kennedy's image was that of a new Roosevelt.[59] Roosevelt had been the one great white man of the century, and perhaps Kennedy appeared to be a second, capable of making accomplishments in the area of civil rights as well as being able to effect some change in the nation's lagging economy.

Perhaps the most important single factor in changing the course of the Negro vote in Atlanta was Kennedy's intervention in the late October arrest and imprisonment of civil rights leader, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. Although Reverend King had refused to show any political preference during the Presidential campaign, it was a widely held belief that if he were to take a stand on one of the candidates, it would probably have been in favor of Vice-President Nixon. His arrest, however, afforded both candidates the opportunity to prove their sympathy with the Negro cause. Kennedy did just that. Upon learning of the arrest, candidate Kennedy immediately phoned Mrs. King, expressing his condolence, while his brother, Robert, inquired into Reverend King's right to bail. Nixon, on the other hand,

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[59] Scammon, loc. cit.

hesitated to make a move in this situation, perhaps fearing the possibility of alienating the southern white vote.

Prior to the 1960 Presidential election, the general consensus among local political observers seemed to be that the Negro vote would go to the Republican candidate, Nixon. It is felt, however, that the King arrest, and the related events, is one (repeat, one) of the major factors in causing the marked shift in the Negro vote in 1960.

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